PITTA

Newsletter of Deccan Birders (formerly Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh)
New Series Volume 20 Number 6 June 2023 (Special Issue)

SPECIAL ISSUE
UTTARAKHAND

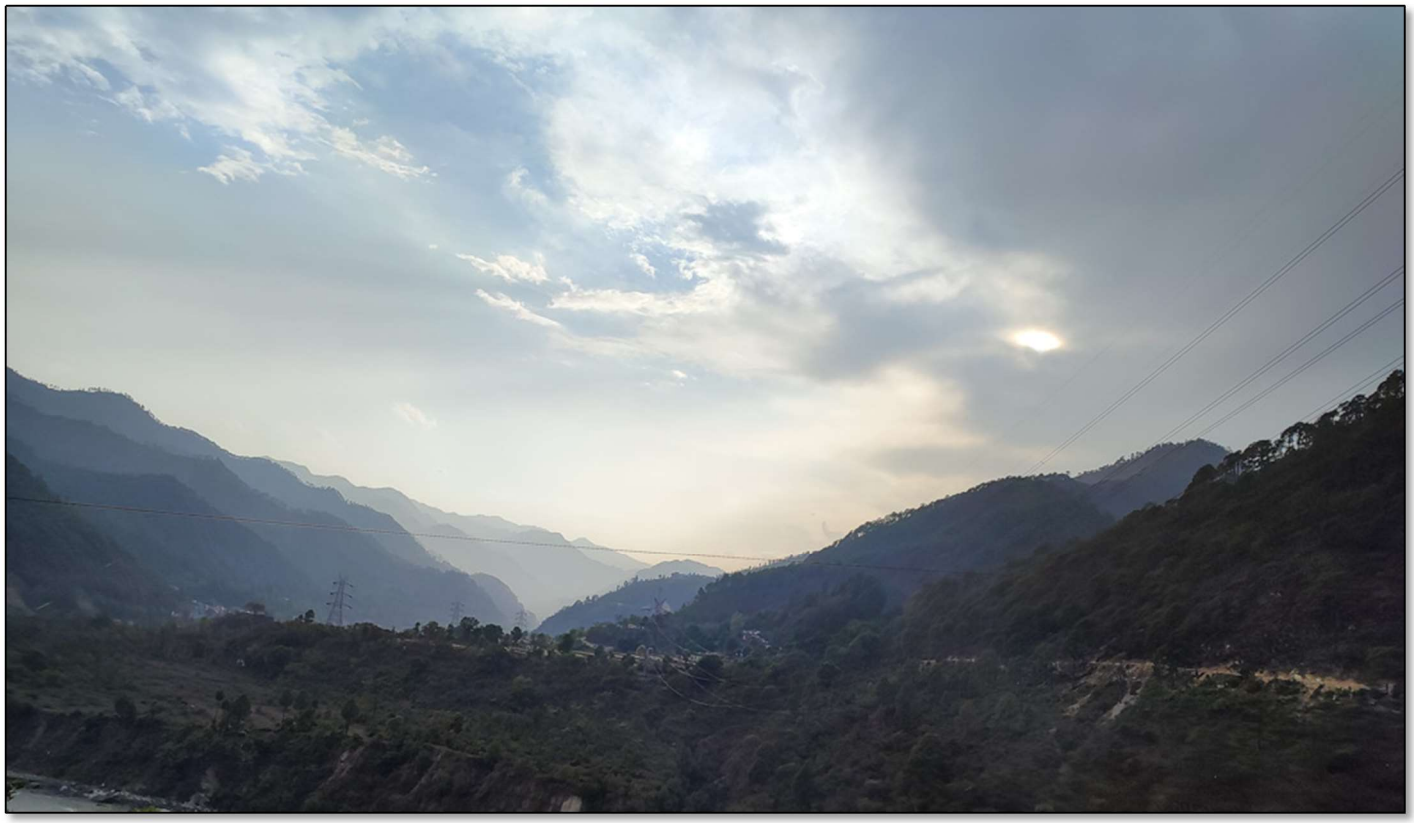
Editor's note

Some of our members had been to Chopta, Manila and Sattal during April 14-21, 2022, for an eight-day birdwatching trip. In this Special Issue of the Pitta, we bring you a report on that trip, along with a number of colourful photographs. We hope you will find this Special Issue interesting.

SUMMER STARS OF THE MOUNTAINS

Trip Report: Chopta, Manila & Sattal, Uttarakhand, April 14-21, 2022

Umesh Mani



A view of the rolling mountains outside Dehradun (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Chopta & Sattal are both among the top birding destinations in the Central & Northern Himalayas, and are good for a trip at almost any time of year. A small group of us from Hyderabad & Chennai undertook a trip to these areas in April 2022.

Taking a flight to Dehradun on the evening of April 13, 2022, we decided to stay at the relatively less crowded Rishikesh, as advised by the guide. Barnali and her daughter Anwesha travelled via Delhi and overnight train to Dehradun, and joined us on the morning of April 14, 2022.

Day-1: April 14, 2022: Transit to Mandal

We were starting the trip from Chopta, and were to stay at Mandal for the first leg of the trip. So we finished breakfast and started the long drive to Mandal – all abuzz with excitement!

The first good sighting was just outside Rishikesh – a majestic Steppe Eagle perched on a dry tree just beside the highway. Traffic was aplenty, so we carefully crossed the road, got closer and took some photos. We noticed that there was one more Steppe Eagle on a nearby tree! After a few minutes, the bird took off, and so did we.

Steppe Eagle (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

A roadside shrine (Photo: Umesh Mani)

These areas are very prone to landslides, and there is also a huge amount of road widening work going on, which often destabilises the hillsides, so drivers are always on the alert for any sign of falling rocks. In spite of that, one of our cars was hit by a (fortunately) small stone, and had its windshield cracked! With no way to fix it en route, we had no choice but to drive on.

I have always been fascinated by the treelines on top of mountains. We saw many such views during this drive.

Beautiful treelines atop mountains (Photo: Umesh Mani)

We stopped at a place near Devprayag that has the confluence of the Alaknanda and Bhagirathi rivers. Waters of two markedly different colours merging – it was a mesmerising sight.

Confluence of Alaknanda and Bhagirathi rivers
(Photo: Umesh Mani)

The next few hours were uneventful, and we made good time. As we drove along, we saw a very pale-looking falcon that we thought was a Sparrowhawk but later turned out to be a Shikra and, a little later, the sight of a pair of vultures gliding around on the thermals brought us to a screeching halt. They turned out to be Himalayan Griffons. As we watched, a couple more birds joined the group, and we found that one of them was a juvenile.

Shikra (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Himalayan Griffon adult (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Himalayan Griffon juvenile (Photo: Umesh Mani)

At the same place, we also saw a few of the beautiful Chestnut-headed Bee-eaters on a tall bamboo.

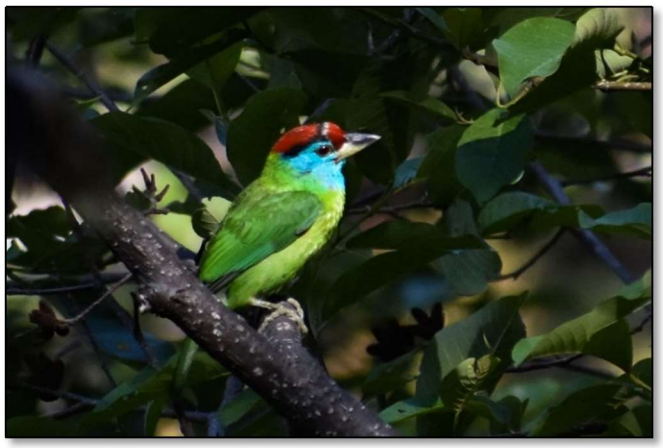
By the time we reached Mandal, it was already getting dark. Tired after the long drive, we had a quick dinner and hit the bed, full of anticipation for tomorrow.

Day-2: April 15, 2022: Mandal

A view of Mandal (Photo: Umesh Mani)

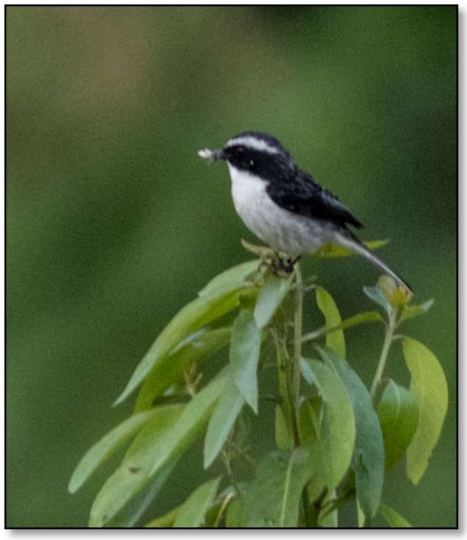
We were to spend the full day today at Mandal. Situated about an hour from Chopta at a lower altitude, Mandal offers good birding and we hoped to rack up a good number of species today.

The first sighting was a Blue-throated Barbet. I was a little surprised, as I had always understood this to be a North-East species. On checking later, I found that the range does extend all the way via a narrow belt along the northern Himalayas. The light was not great, though, and I couldn't get any decent photographs, but it did turn up again later.



Blue-throated Barbet (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Common Rosefinch (Photo: Umesh Mani)



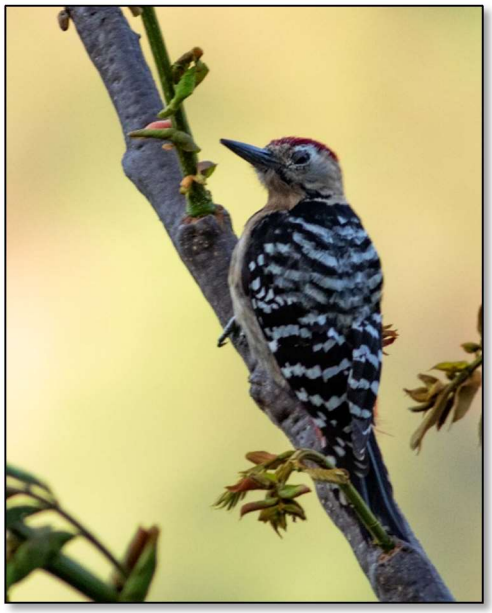
Grey Bushchat male (Photo: Umesh Mani)

The next few sightings were, as expected, some of the commoners of the region – Common Rosefinch, Grey Bushchat, Himalayan Bulbul. A Himalayan Shrike-babbler enlivened things for a while, as everyone scrambled around, trying to get a good view and some photos. A Grey-breasted Prinia and a pair of Russet Sparrows also turned up.

Himalayan Shrike-babbler (Photo: Umesh Mani)

We walked to the next bend, and were surprised to see a Barking Deer just below us on the slope! A Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker was seen well and a Grey-hooded Warbler flitted about in the bushes.

Barking Deer (Photo: Umesh Mani)



Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Grey-hooded Warbler (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

A special sighting followed – the Black-throated Sunbird. It hung around long enough to enable us to get some good views.

Black-throated Sunbird (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Hume's Leaf Warbler (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

A warbler with a rusty-orange patch on the throat was confusing – it was later identified as Hume's Leaf Warbler. I learned that some individuals do show that throat patch. As if identifying warblers wasn't tough enough already! Also flitting about were the Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher and Black-throated Bushtit.

Black-throated Bushtit (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

A Black-chinned Babbler gave great views for a bit. A Eurasian Jay, Scarlet Minivet and Blue-capped Rock Thrush were also around.

Black-chinned Babbler (Photo: Umesh Mani)

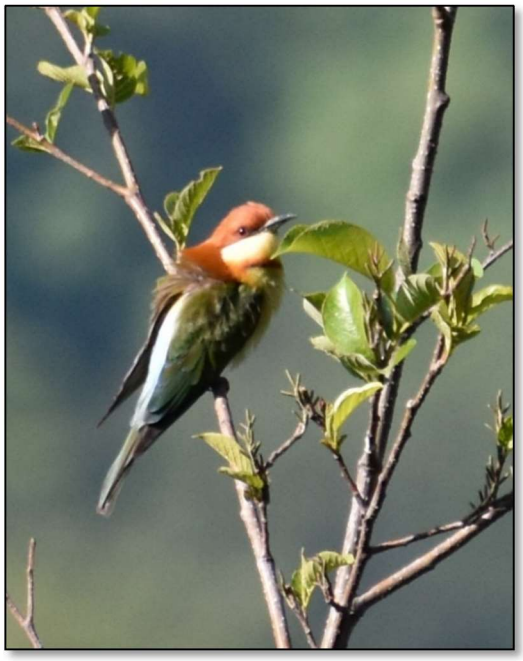
Eurasian Jay (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Scarlet Minivet (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

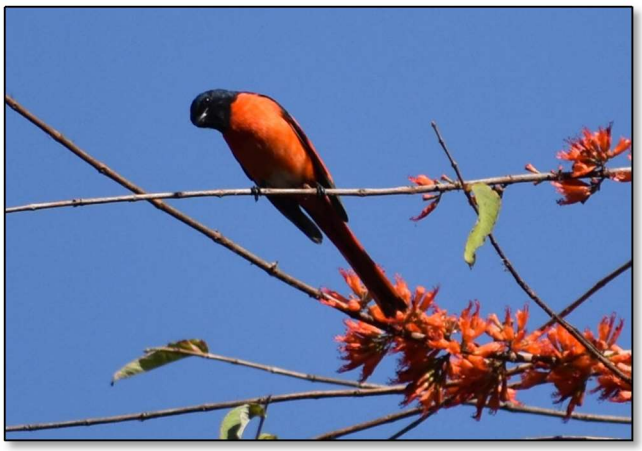
Alpine Thrush (Photo: Umesh Mani)

An Alpine Thrush and Streak-throated Swallow were seen with nesting material.

Streak-throated Swallow (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

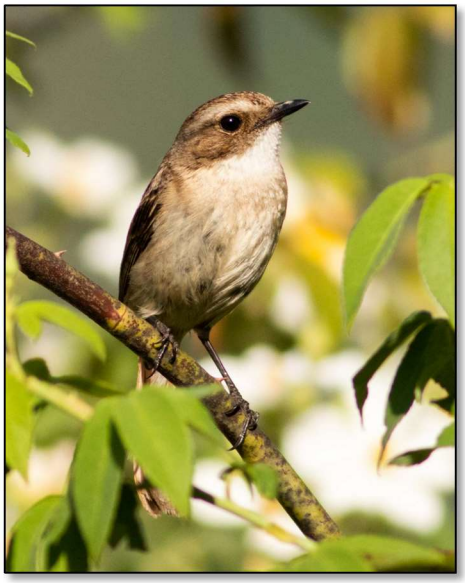


Chestnut-headed Bee-eater (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)



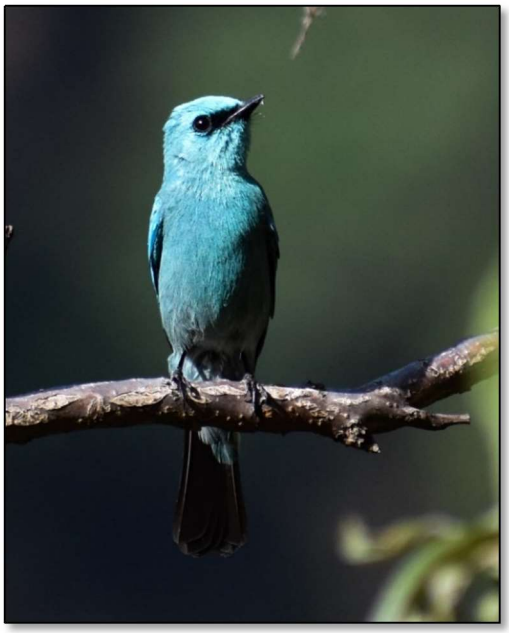
Long-tailed Minivet (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

A Long-tailed Minivet, Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, Grey Bushchat and Hume's Leaf Warbler gave good sightings. The Blue-capped Rock Thrush turned up again, this time in good light.



Grey Bushchat female (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Blue-capped Rock Thrush (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)



Verditer Flycatcher (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

The noisy Black Bulbul passed by, and the beautiful Verditer Flycatcher put in an appearance. A Grey-hooded Warbler was also seen.

It had been a very eventful and productive morning, but we were now starving. We drove back to the hotel for some much-needed breakfast. As we waited, we saw some ladies carrying huge loads of leaves – it drove home the fact that life can be quite hard in the mountains.

Ladies carrying loads of leaves (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Kashmir Rock Agama (Photo: Dr Barnali Chaudhuri)

A bluish lizard, later identified as Kashmir Rock Agama, and some House Sparrows distracted us for a while, as did a rare raptor that turned out, unfortunately, to be the familiar Black Kite!

Black Kite (Photo: Umesh Mani)

The Streaked Laughingthrush is one of the most common species in the hills, and hence often ignored. But we saw a beautiful specimen that caught our eye because it was carrying a mouthful of worms! Evidently it had bred recently, and had a bunch of hungry mouths to feed!

Plumbeous Water Redstart male (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Blue Whistling Thrush with nesting material
(Photo: Umesh Mani)

Breakfast done, we headed to a nearby stream. The first sighting was as expected – Plumbeous Water Redstart followed by a Grey Wagtail, Blue Whistling Thrush with nesting material – and a Brown Dipper!

Brown Dipper (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

The team at the stream (Photo courtesy: Dr Barnali Chaudhuri)

Since the sun was high, not much activity was there. We spent some time sitting on the rocks in the middle of the stream, cooling off, and then headed back for lunch. We saw an Indian Tortoiseshell Butterfly on the way, and a Common Jester at the hotel.

Common Jester (Photo: Umesh Mani)

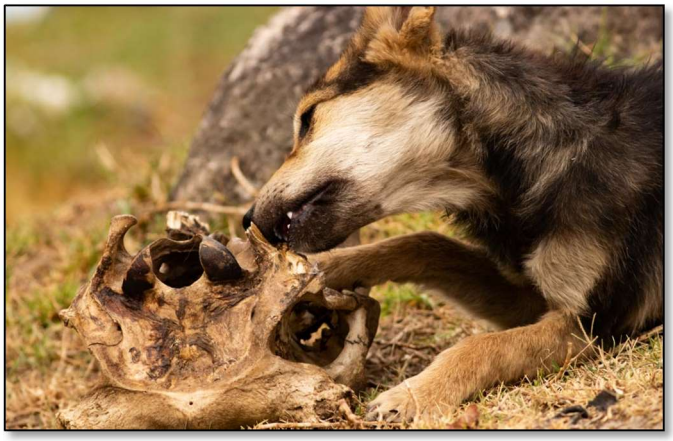
The evening session started with a sighting of a family of 4 Streaked Laughingthrushes that were playing, chasing each other around, and darting in and out of a JCB!

Streaked Laughingthrush (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Red-vented Bulbul (Photo: Umesh Mani)

House Sparrow female with worms (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A Black Kite circled, and we were entertained for a few minutes by a village dog that chased a squirrel around. We saw some commoners – Spotted Dove, Red-vented Bulbul (albeit of the *benghalensis* sub-species with the rufous ear patches), a few House Sparrows, also carrying worms – and something rather unusual – a dog probing inside, and chewing on, a completely dried out rib cage of some cattle.



Dog nibbling at cattle skeleton (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Red-billed Blue Magpie (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

A short walk in a nearby forest trail yielded the Grey Treepie, Red-billed Blue Magpie, Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon, another Verditer Flycatcher, Plum-headed Parakeet and a Rusty-tailed Flycatcher with nesting material.

Small Niltava (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A beautiful Small Niltava gave us a few minutes, although it kept moving, making it tough to photograph.

Black Bulbul (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Black Francolin (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

A small flock of Black Bulbuls created their usual ruckus. As we scanned the nearby fields, we found a gorgeous Black Francolin wandering around, and a flock of Wedge-tailed Green Pigeons landed on a nearby tree – so close that I couldn't fit the entire bird into the frame! – before moving a little further.

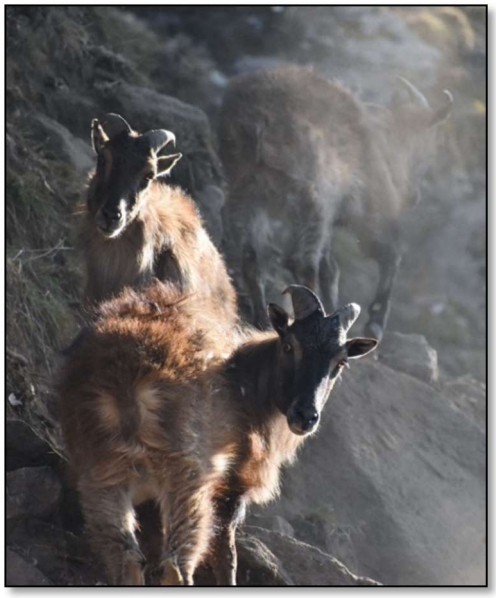
Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

With that, we came to the end of the first full day of birding on this trip. It had yielded a good number of interesting species, and we wound up, full of anticipation for tomorrow.

Day-3: April 16, 2022: Chopta

The plan today was to drive up to Chopta and bird thereabouts. We started the day with the Blue Whistling Thrush, then came to a mound where a couple of Yellow-billed Blue Magpies were foraging. As we were watching them, we noticed a head popping up and dipping behind the mound. After a few seconds, it showed itself properly – it was the Koklass Pheasant! It did not give us an opportunity to take decent photographs, but it was exciting nevertheless.

Moving on, we drove past a Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush on a tree, and a small herd of Himalayan Tahr caught our eye. They were grazing on the hill slope, quite close to the road, and we were able to observe them for quite some time.



Himalayan Tahr (Photo: Dr Barnali Chaudhuri)

Himalayan Pika (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A Himalayan Pika was seen scurrying around, and then came the sighting of the morning – the Himalayan Monal. We watched it for about a minute before it flew off across the valley.

Chestnut-tailed Minla (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A Blyth's Leaf Warbler, some Black-throated Bushtits and an Ashy-throated Warbler were followed by a pair of Chestnut-tailed Minlas and a Himalayan Griffon.

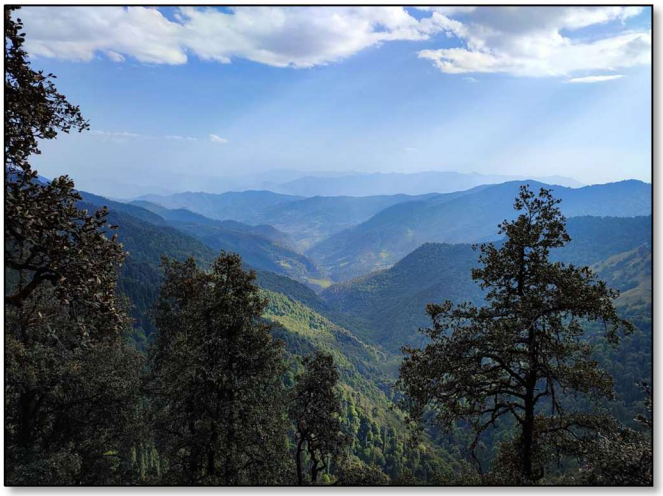
Himalayan Griffon (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Ashy-throated Warbler (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A Himalayan Woodpecker gave good views as it probed the moss-covered branches of a nearby tree, and a Coal Tit hopped around in the vicinity.

Himalayan Woodpecker (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Dark Clouded Yellow (*Colias fieldii*)
(Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

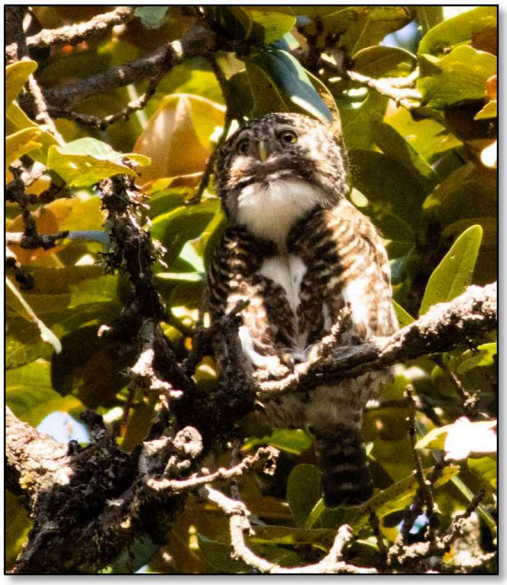


A view of the Chopta hills (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Golden Bush Robin female (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

A Golden Bush Robin engaged us for a good few minutes as it flitted about in some flowering bushes nearby.

We had been hearing a familiar call every now and then, for quite some time; we followed it up the road for a couple of kilometres, and finally found the actual bird on a tree right next to the road – the Collared Owlet! Known as an extremely fierce raptor, although small in size, its call is enough to send smaller birds into a tizzy. Having heard it on so many earlier trips, I was elated to finally see it for the first time. This particular individual seemed somewhat drowsy, and during the half hour or so that we were there, changed position just once. It gave us plenty of time to get a good look and some decent photographs, albeit at an awkward upward angle.



Collared Owlet (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Ainsliaea latifolia (Photo: Dr Barnali Chaudhuri)

We took a break for breakfast before continuing. It was sad to see that even at that altitude and remoteness, Large-billed Crows were feeding on discarded *puris* outside the roadside eateries.

Large-billed Crow (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Indian Tortoiseshell (*Aglais caschmirensis*)
(Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Coal Tit (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Yellow-browed Tit (Photo: Umesh Mani)

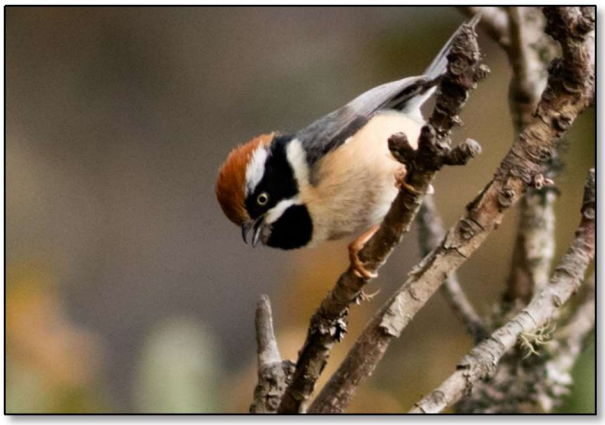
The next patch gave us an Indian Tortoiseshell butterfly before we came upon a mixed hunting party – Coal Tit, Yellow-browed Tit, White-tailed Nuthatch. A Yellow-billed Blue Magpie was also around.

White-tailed Nuthatch (Photo: Umesh Mani)

It was now time for a break. After lunch and a brief rest, we started off again. The Large-billed Crows here seemed to be built much heavier than the ones down South.

Snow Pigeon (Photo: Umesh Mani)

In the valley nearby, a flock of Snow Pigeons flew past, too far for us to even see them properly, but landed on the other side. As there wasn't much other activity, we decided to drive over and see if we could get a better view. We did find the flock, but it was still high above the road, and we got to see them only as they took off again and flew overhead.



Black-throated Bushtit (Photo: Umesh Mani)

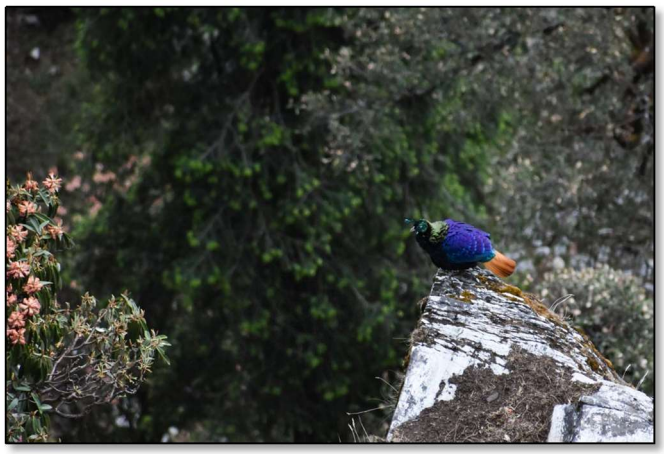
We were consoled by a small mixed flock of Black-throated Bushtits, Ashy-throated Warbler, Coal Tit, Scarlet Minivet, Lemon-rumped Warbler and Blyth's Leaf Warbler.

Lemon-rumped Warbler (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Blyth's Leaf Warbler (Photo: Umesh Mani)

It was frantic action for about 10 minutes, when finally the flock moved on, leaving us with tired arms and great exhilaration!

It was past 4:00PM by now, and we knew we had another half hour or so at best. So we moved ahead, hoping to find the Monal again. And find it we did – another pair, on the hillsides. They were below us, foraging – probably getting ready to wind up for the day. We saw the male fanning his tail in the characteristic courtship display but it seemed more a hopeful gesture rather than any concrete attempt at wooing a female – because we couldn't see a female anywhere nearby!



Himalayan Monal male (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

In fact, the male spent considerable time standing on a precipice and scanning the valley. Finally he seemed to give up, and made his way off to forage some more before returning to the rock once again.

Himalayan Tahr (Photo: Umesh Mani)

We decided to start moving back, but a little distance away, we were halted by a small herd of Himalayan Tahr on the hill. Just ahead, we found another Monal – we had seen 5 males today! This one was making its way up the hillside, probably to its night roost. Following in its footsteps, we decided to do the same – head for the hotel.

In the morning, we had heard the Hill Partridge calling, but hadn't been able to locate it. We also saw the Kalij Pheasant crossing the road several times – in fact, the final tally for the day was 7 males and 3 females! – but couldn't photograph it even once. So, while today had been a good day, we did have some gaps we hoped to fill tomorrow.

Day-4: April 17, 2022: Mandal & Chopta

There was a little uncertainty as there had been some overnight snowfall up in the hills, and it was not clear if the roads to Chopta were open or blocked. Hence we decided to bird at Mandal in the morning session, and then head towards Chopta to try our luck later.

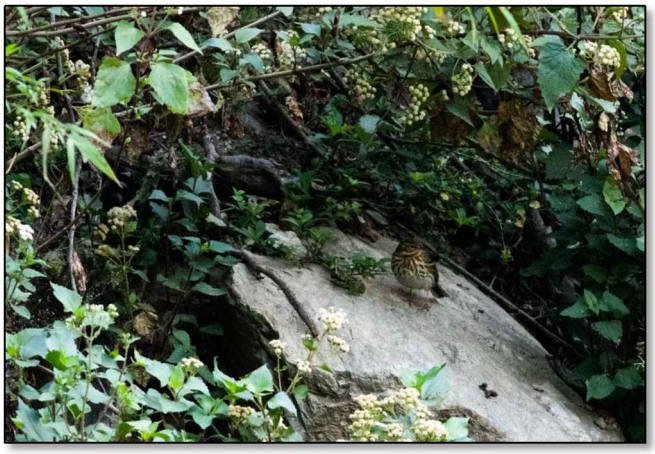
Grey Bushchat female (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

The day's tally started within the hotel parking itself with some commoners – House Sparrow, Red-vented Bulbul, Grey Bushchat – but we were itching to get out and see some specialities of the region. As we started, we saw the Common Rosefinch, Russet Sparrow, a very-suspicious-looking Spotted Dove – and a Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler! I had always believed that this bird is a skulker that keeps to the scrub and underbrush, but here it was, perched high up in an open tree, calling away!

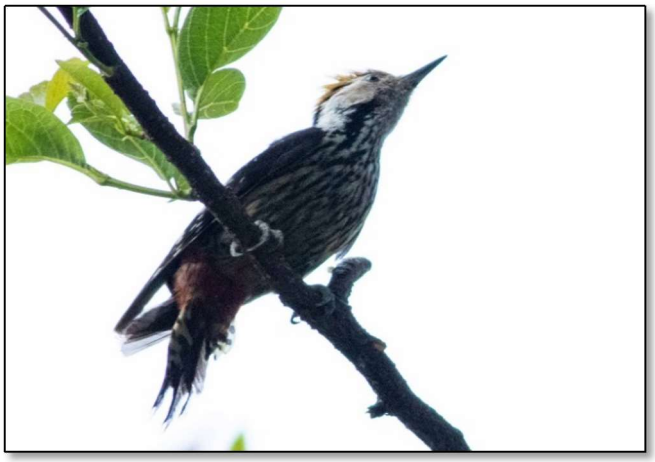
Russet Sparrow (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A Great Barbet gave some good views. As we walked along, the guide pointed out a pair of Olive-backed Pipits on a rock that was surrounded by bushes – it took us a long time to locate it!



Olive-backed Pipit (Photo: Umesh Mani)



Brown-fronted Woodpecker (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A Brown-fronted Woodpecker popped up and created a flutter.

Himalayan Black-lored Tit (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

A Himalayan Black-lored Tit perched on a dry twig and sang merrily away, giving up plenty of opportunity to watch and photograph it. It was easily the best view any of us had ever had of this beautiful bird!

Having watched to our heart's content, we moved on. We came upon a small flock of the raucous Black Bulbuls – it is a constant source of wonder to me how they pick the most tangled of perches!

Black Bulbul (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush tantalised us, flitting about nearby but refusing to show itself properly. Then we saw it in a slightly more open part of a tree and took some photos, only to realise that this was another bird inside the same bush – the Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler! We did soon manage to find the Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush, though.

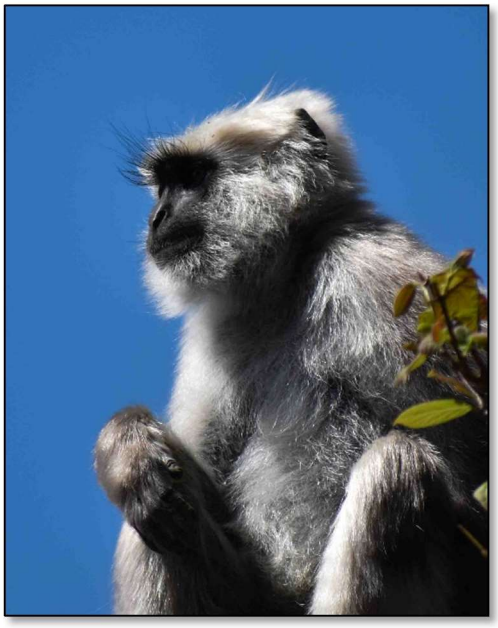
Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush (Photo: Umesh Mani)

House Sparrow with nesting material (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A House Sparrow gathered nesting material – a white fibrous material that turned out to be a feather – from the road.

A hyperactive Streaked Laughingthrush popped up near us, so close that we could barely manage to fit it into the frame. Then it started singing – and it was only then that I realised that the open wings and the bending and hopping was part of a courtship display!

Streaked Laughingthrush (Photo: Umesh Mani)



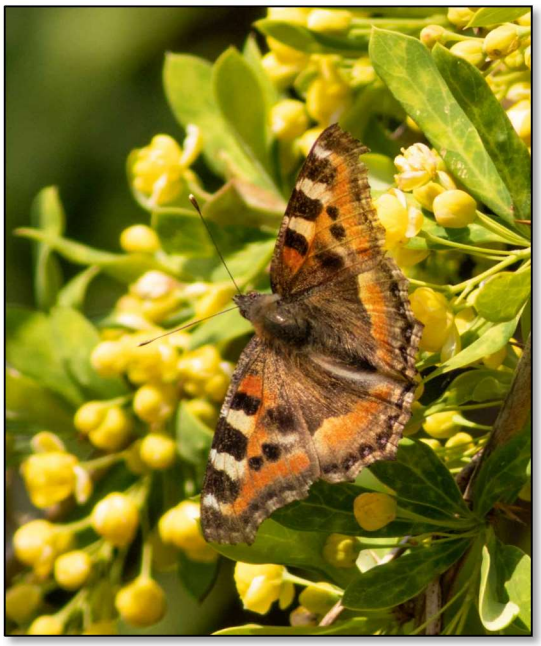
Hanuman Langur (Photo: Dr Barnali Chaudhuri)

After a quick though late breakfast, we headed out and started driving towards Chopta. We saw a Hanuman Langur in a meditative mood, and a Common Hoopoe called away from a tree, reminding us of how the scientific name was arrived at. The same tree also yielded a Great Barbet.

As we drove ahead, we heard some rustling and saw some movement in a patch of dry leaf litter. Excited that we may have found one of the enigmatic thrushes of this region, we stopped to scan the place, and found a pair of Grey-winged Blackbirds.

Plumbeous Water Redstart (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Rufous Sibia, Plumbeous Water Redstart, Great Barbet were some of the other species seen, besides a nicely-posing Indian Tortoiseshell butterfly.



Indian Tortoiseshell (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Great Barbet (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Jungle Myna (Photo: Umesh Mani)

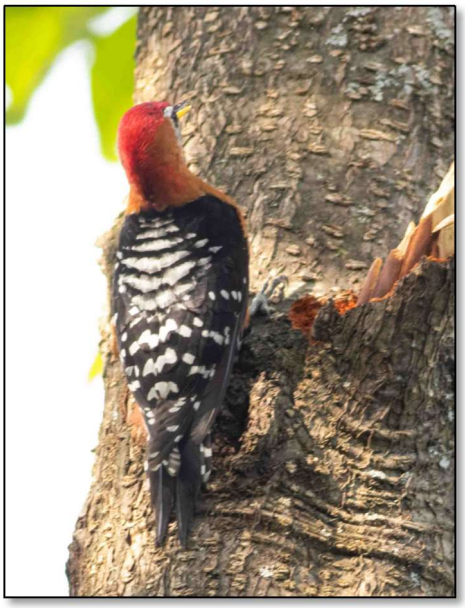
We stopped at a small shack for lunch. In front, there was a small embankment made of rocks that gave us a few birds: a pair of Jungle Mynas and a Common Hoopoe.

Common Hoopoe (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Grey-winged Blackbird (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Down the road, a Tickell's Thrush wandered around, and we saw a pair of the beautiful Grey-winged Blackbirds on a small slope beside the road, along with the ubiquitous Streaked Laughingthrush with a moth catch.

Kalij Pheasant (Photo: Umesh Mani)



Rufous-bellied Woodpecker (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A Kalij Pheasant pair crossed the road in front of us – again – and a Rufous-bellied Woodpecker gave a brief glimpse before flying off. A couple of Striated Laughingthrushes gave us plenty of time to see them well.

Striated Laughingthrush (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

By now, it was almost 5:00PM, and we started the drive back to Mandal.

Like most pheasants, the Monal also usually heads uphill to roost in the evening. So we headed to the place that we had dubbed the 'Monal Point' and decided to wait on the road, near a spot where apparently it had been seen crossing a few times earlier – we hoped that it would make the crossing there, and we would be able to see it well in the open.

Himalayan Monal male (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

We saw another male slowly meandering its way up the hill towards us, but it frequently stopped and looked downward, presumably waiting for a female.

The group at the Monal Point
(Photo courtesy: Dr Barnali Chaudhuri)

In the meantime, we watched it and kept taking photographs – although the light was poor and the top-down angle was not great, you just cannot resist shooting the Monal when it is there in front of you!

Golden Eagle (Photo: Umesh Mani)

We saw a Golden Eagle soar for a bit and then settle down on a far-away tree, but some crows hassled it so much that it didn't stay for long.

Sunset at Monal Point (Photo: Umesh Mani)

After waiting for more than half an hour, though – during which the Monal had not budged from the spot halfway down the hill – we started to feel that maybe it would not come up now. We therefore decided to wind up and head back – tomorrow we were supposed to go to Tungnath, which is quite a gruelling trek, and we needed to eat and get some good rest in the night.

Day-5: April 18, 2022: Tungnath & Chopta

Before the Tungnath trek (Photo courtesy: Umesh Mani)

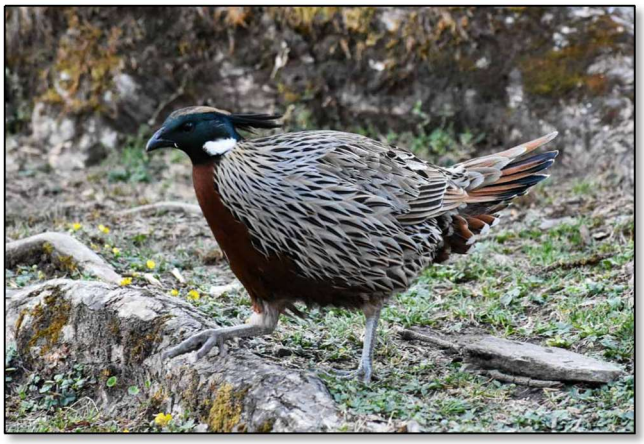
At an altitude of around 3700m (12100ft), Tungnath is one of the highest temples of Lord Shiva in India. It is also a birding hotspot, offering great opportunities to spot several birds that are otherwise difficult to get. However, it is not a place for easy birding – the trek is quite arduous, more so for city dwellers with sedentary lifestyles.

I had done this trek during an earlier trip around 5-6 years back. This time, with so many years having passed, I was a little uncertain, but was keen to do the trek for my own satisfaction – and of course, to also see and photograph the birds of Tungnath.

I had decided that I would do the trek at a slow and steady pace. So, when I saw the first bird of the trek – a beautiful Monal – the others were already ahead, and I was the only one there!

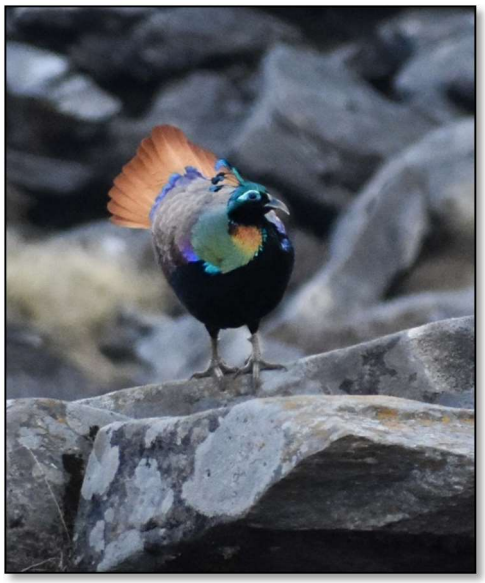
Possibly because they are used to the presence of pilgrims on the temple route, the birds here are not so shy, and do sometimes give an opportunity to see them up close. This Monal, too, was just about 4-5 metres away from me. Although it was still quite misty and the light was not great, I took a few photos as the bird walked along the trekking path, turned onto the hill slope, turned towards me – and fanned its tail in its typical display position!

After a while, it moved off up the slope, and I moved ahead. A little distance ahead, I was surprised to see some of the other group members kneeling around the track, photographing something. When I got there, I was thrilled to see that it was the magnificent Koklass Pheasant! It was foraging just off the trail, unconcerned about the humans hanging around there.



Koklass Pheasant male (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

The other group members moved ahead, but I spent nearly 20 minutes there, watching and photographing the bird. Whatever the reasons, it was such a pleasure to see a pheasant that wasn't running away from you!



Himalayan Monal male displaying
(Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Finally, after the Koklass slowly walked away, I moved on, only to be stopped again by a Monal displaying on a rock overlooking the valley.

Partial view of the trekking route (Photo: Umesh Mani)

After a few minutes, I got moving again – after all, there was still quite a distance to go. A little later, I came upon a small patch of bushes, where I saw a Golden Bush Robin, and a Lammergeier gave a flypast. Unfortunately I couldn't get any proper photos as it came from behind, and was flying away from me – that was disappointing.

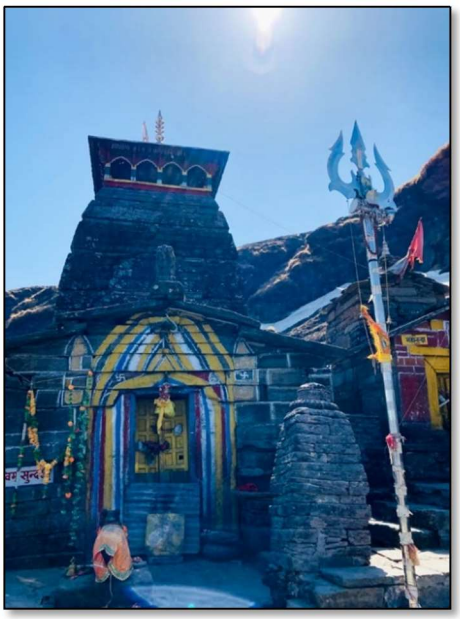
Lammergeier (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Himalayan Pika (Photo: Umesh Mani)

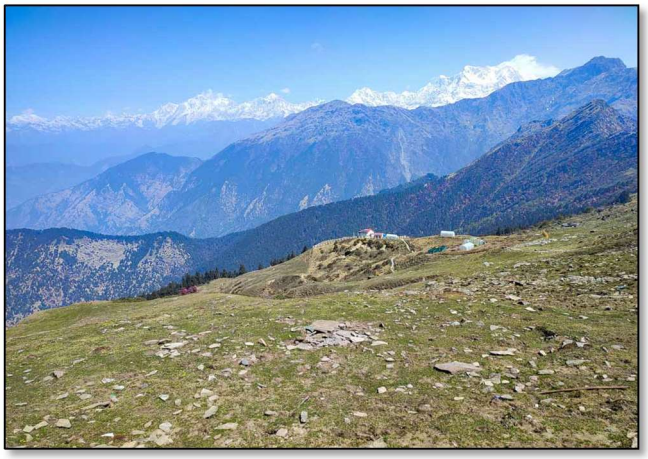
A Himalayan Pika entertained for a while, as it scurried around on the grass, looking for food while keeping a watchful eye out for predators.

I walked for about half an hour before coming upon any more activity – a Chestnut-tailed Minla which I saw for just a few seconds. For the next hour or so, I focused on the trek, and was almost at the top when I saw a White-capped Water Redstart atop some sheds.

White-capped Water Redstart (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)



Tungnath temple (Photo: Dr Barnali Chaudhuri)

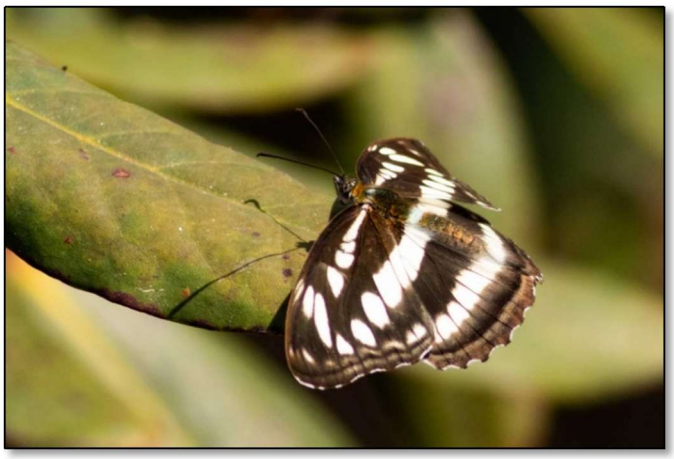


View from the top of Tungnath (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Soon after, I reached the top of the hill. After spending a little while at the temple, I caught up with the other members of the group, and we walked around for a bit, taking photographs of the temple and the breath-taking views all around. The trek had taken me around 5 hours, and it had been quite tough, but I was quite satisfied that I had been able to complete it.

After about 45 minutes, we had to start the walk back down, which also would not be easy.

Variegated Laughingthrush (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)



Himalayan Sergeant (*Athyma opalina*) (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A Himalayan Griffon circled for a while and a small flock of Rosy Pipits flew over.

Rosy Pipit (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Some of the other members took a detour on the way down, walking through a small patch of scrub and bushes, where they saw a few birds like the Pink-browed Rosefinch, Coal Tit, Black-throated Bushtit etc.

Meanwhile, I saw a beautiful Himalayan Bluetail that allowed me a few seconds before flying off.

Himalayan Bluetail (Photo: Umesh Mani)

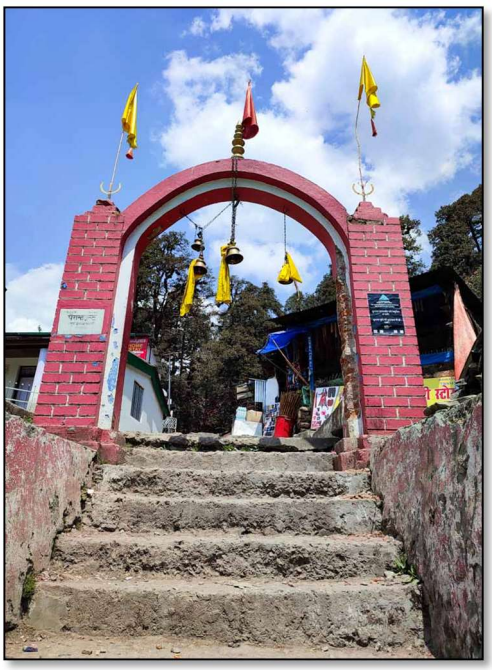
Common Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*)
(Photo: Dr Barnali Chaudhuri)

Genus *Oxygraphis*
(Photo: Dr Barnali Chaudhuri)

Gentians (Genus Gentiana) (Photo: Dr Barnali Chaudhuri)

Rhododendrons everywhere (Photo: Umesh Mani)

We had a quick break at a shack on the side of the trail, then marched on down. There were lots of Rhododendron trees in various colours, as well as several other flowers, all over the place, and we took some photos.



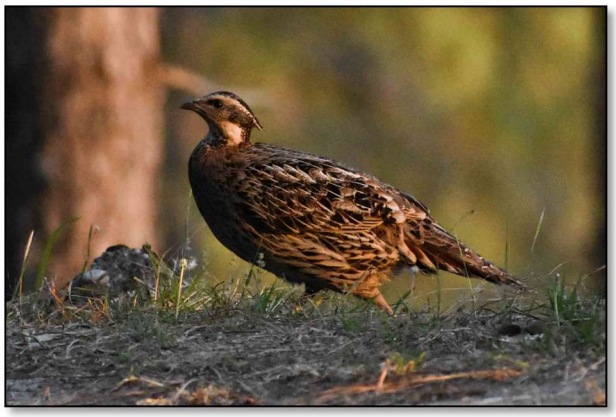
Entrance to the Tungnath trek (Photo: Umesh Mani)

But we had to move from Chopta to Manila today, and couldn't afford to linger. So we quickly drove back to the hotel, packed up, had lunch and left. We reached Manila quite late – around 9:00PM – after a long drive. So, after a quick dinner, we retired for the day.

Day-6: April 19, 2022: Manila & Sattal

Manila is a location that has recently become popular because of the relative ease with which one can see a pheasant that is usually quite difficult to get – the Cheer Pheasant. Our main objective too, therefore, was to see the Cheer, then move on to Sattal.

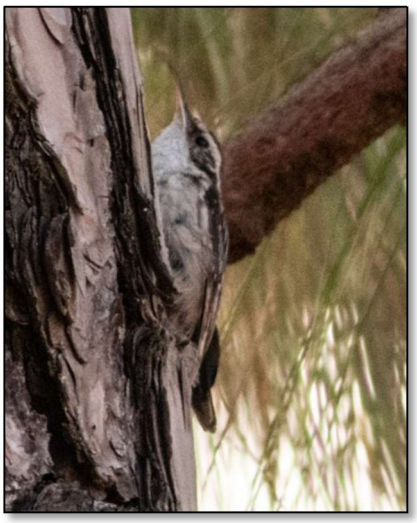
With only one session of birding in hand, we made an early start. We started the day with a Streak-throated Swallow perched on a wire, Black-headed Jay, Oriental Turtle Dove and Russet Sparrow female.



Koklass Pheasant female (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Right outside the resort gate, we were surprised to see a Koklass Pheasant female, foraging beside the road. It was nice to add the female to the list, after having seen the male at Tungnath. It was a great way to start the day, and we hoped that it boded well for the Cheer too!

We reached the general area where the Cheer was usually seen. The guide got busy looking for the Cheer, while we decided to catch up with the other bird activity around. Quite a few birds were moving about, but the canopy was high and the early morning sunlight was sloping straight into our eyes, so it was not easy. Nevertheless, we quickly notched up a few species.



Bar-tailed Treecreeper (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon gave good views, as did a Verditer Flycatcher. A Bar-tailed Treecreeper did its characteristic walk around a tree trunk, and we also saw a Barking Deer.

The guide called us and asked us to settle down at a point on the road, overlooking the hillside. He had heard the call of the Cheer, and told us that if we waited, we should be able to see the Cheer in some time – and that if we made any noise or unnecessary movements, we probably wouldn't!

Suitably chastened, we sat quietly for the next half hour or so, and finally saw some movement on the slope, quite a way down – the Cheer! We crossed our fingers, hoping that it would come closer.

Cheer Pheasant (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

There seemed to be 2-3 individuals, and we watched them as they slowly meandered closer. Their sandy coloration makes for great camouflage, and it was quite difficult for us to locate and track them in the drying grass, and through all the pine trees.

The guide had told us that the Cheer often come right up to the road. We were not so fortunate, however – they stayed put about 50-60 feet below us, foraged for a while there, and moved back down the hill.

Then we decided to get going, since we had another long drive ahead of us to Sattal. We headed back to the resort for breakfast. While I was in the room, some of the others got to see a flypast by the Mountain Hawk Eagle!

Himalayan Brimstone (*Gonepteryx nepalensis*) on
Plume Thistles (Genus *Cirsium*) (Photo: Dr Barnali Chaudhuri)

After a while, we started off and, finishing lunch on the way, reached Sattal around 4:00PM. Since the light was still good, we decided that we would get in a quick couple of hours of birding first, before going to the hotel.

We went to the spot popularly known as the Studio, where a small natural stream – just a trickle, actually – seems to attract many birds that come there to bathe and drink water. They also don't seem to be too concerned by the presence of people, although of course you had to keep a distance.

There were already several people there, so we found ourselves a vantage point and settled down.

Oriental White-eye (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

The first bird to turn up was the Blue-winged Siva followed by the Oriental White-eye and Rufous Sibia. Then a lull followed, during which we saw only a Greater Yellownape.

Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Red-billed Leiothrix (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

After that, for the next hour or so, there was no let-up: several species took turns coming in for a quick dip before flying off. The action started with the Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher, followed by Red-billed Leiothrix, Verditer Flycatcher and Orange-headed Thrush.

Rufous Sibia (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Rufous Sibia, White-browed Fantail, Blue-winged Siva, Grey-hooded Warbler, Indian Paradise-flycatcher and White-throated Laughingthrush were also seen.

White-browed Fantail (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Indian Paradise-flycatcher (Photo: Umesh Mani

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Blue-winged Siva (Photo: Umesh Mani)

For a change, it was nice to be able to sit down, see and photograph birds without too much trouble.

I also photographed a butterfly that I initially thought was the Common Jezebel, but on checking later, it turned out to be the much more 'interesting' Chinese Red-based Jezebel!

Chinese Red-based Jezebel (*Delias pasithoe pasithoe*)
(Photo: Umesh Mani)

Crane Fly sp (Photo: Umesh Mani)

By now, it was now about 6:00PM, so with that, it was back to the pavilion for us. But the mountains being what they are, there was 'wildlife' all around us.

Pantropical Huntsman Spider (Photo: Umesh Mani)

<u>Day-7: April 20, 2022: Sattal</u>

Yesterday's short session having whetted the appetite, we decided to go back to the Studio in the morning for some time, before moving out for other birding. The day started at the hotel parking, as usual, with the Streaked Laughingthrush, House Sparrow, etc.

One particular bush, which had a couple of Plum-headed Parakeets, also seemed to show some movement below, and it seemed like something bigger. We went closer to investigate, and were taken aback to see that it was a shoe!

The pseudo Parakeet (L) with Plum-headed Parakeet (R)
(Photo: Umesh Mani)

Verditer Flycatcher (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Once at the Studio, we settled down to wait. After some time, the birds started coming to the water – Verditer Flycatcher, Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher, Tickell's Thrush pair, Red-billed Leiothrix.

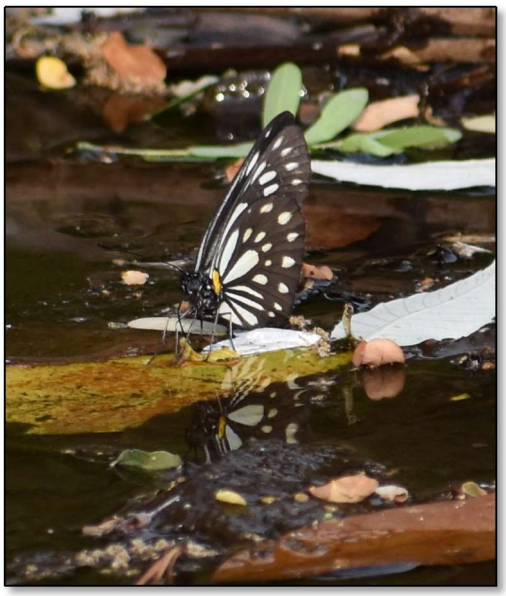
Tickell's Thrush (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Then came one that we hadn't seen so far – the Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush. While I had seen it earlier, it was a pleasure to see it well and in an unhurried manner.

Greenish Warbler (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Some of the usual suspects also dropped by – Blue-winged Siva, Greenish Warbler, White-browed Fantail, Western Crowned Warbler, Oriental White-eye and Grey-hooded Warbler.



Great Blackvein (*Aporia agathon*)
(Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

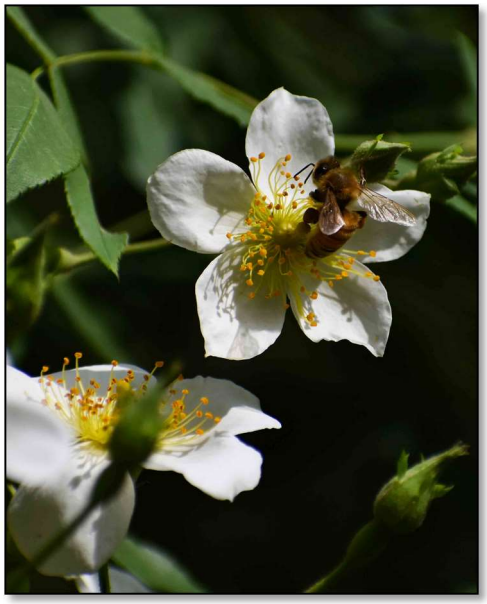
Because we were sitting quietly, one of the Tickell's Thrushes was emboldened enough to come closer – it came within some 6 feet of where we were sitting! It is an amazing feeling to see that possibly the bird does not consider you a threat. It foraged in the leaf litter for a bit, then walked away.

Striated Laughingthrush (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Another beautiful bird landed up at the water – the Striated Laughingthrush.

During a lull, we surveyed the grassy areas nearby, and spotted a pair of Kalij Pheasants strolling along. A little later, a Barking Deer also wandered across.

Slender Skimmer (*Orthetrum sabina*)
(Photo: Dr Barnali Chaudhuri)



Western Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera*) on a flower of Genus *Rosa*
(Photo: Dr Barnali Chaudhuri)

Common Map (*Cyrestis thyodamas*)
(Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Banded Bay Cuckoo (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Suddenly we heard some excited whispers, and the guide pointed out a bird that had landed up at the water – the Banded Bay Cuckoo! We had not been expecting it, and were quite thrilled to see a normally-elusive bird here. It didn't bathe, though – just drank some water and left.

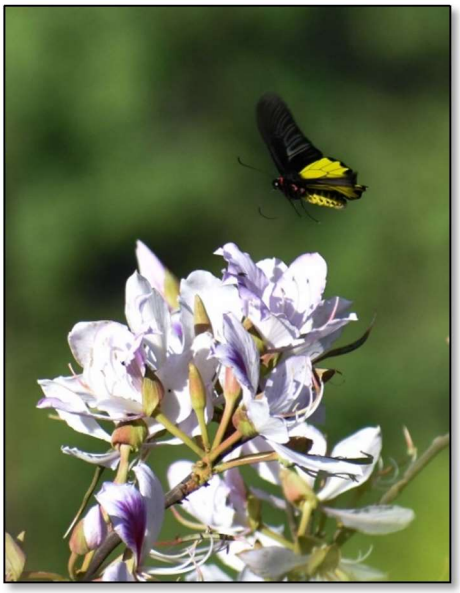
White-throated Laughingthrush (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Next in line was the White-throated Laughingthrush. It usually moves in flocks, and here too, a group of some 7-8 of them landed up. They were characteristically loud, calling, pushing each other around – and basically ensuring that all the other birds left! But you can't stay irritated at them for long – they are quite beautiful creatures, and always up to some antics.

White-throated Laughingthrush courtship feeding
(Photo: Umesh Mani)

We also got to see one brief episode of what I believe was courtship feeding.

Common Lascar (*Pantoporia hordonia*)
(Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)



Golden Birdwing (*Troides aeacus*)
(Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

After some time, a lovely Emerald Dove walked in. It had just one feather out of place – somewhat like the schoolboy who just cannot tuck his shirt in properly! It was quite endearing.

Emerald Dove (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Blue Whistling Thrush (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

On the grass were walking around the beautiful Blue Whistling Thrush, which is often ignored simply because it is so common, and a couple of Grey Wagtails.

Grey Wagtail (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Also came the gorgeous Blue-throated Flycatcher, and the Indian Paradise-flycatcher made a recce visit.

A yellow bird had us all puzzled. Its colours were like the yellow bulbuls of the South, but the structure seemed like a Flycatcher. It was, much later, identified as a possible sub-adult or juvenile Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher that, for some reason, had not acquired its usual colours!

Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Not surprising, I suppose, since an adult Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher was also hanging around at the time.

An Asian Brown Flycatcher was also seen.

Green-backed Tit (Photo: Umesh Mani)

The Himalayan Black-lored and Green-backed Tits landed up together, making for an interesting comparison. The Orange-headed Thrush made an appearance – it was an individual of the nominate race, *Z. c. citrina*, without the vertical black stripes across the ear coverts.

Orange-headed Thrush (Photo: Umesh Mani)

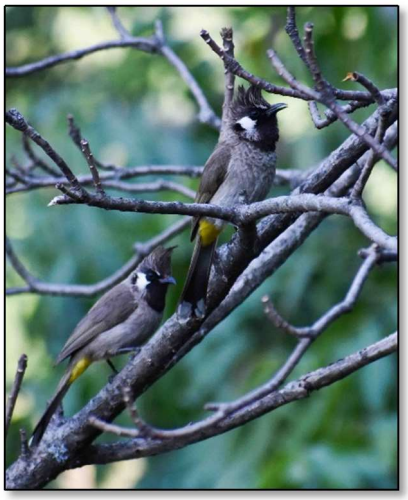
Some members of the group decided to take a walk in the forest, and were rewarded with sightings of the Rufous-throated Partridge, Coal Tit, Grey-winged Blackbird, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler and others. I had decided to stay back, and of course, later rued missing out on these species – especially the Partridge. I consoled myself saying that the time would come!

Orange-bellied Leafbird male (Photo: Umesh Mani)

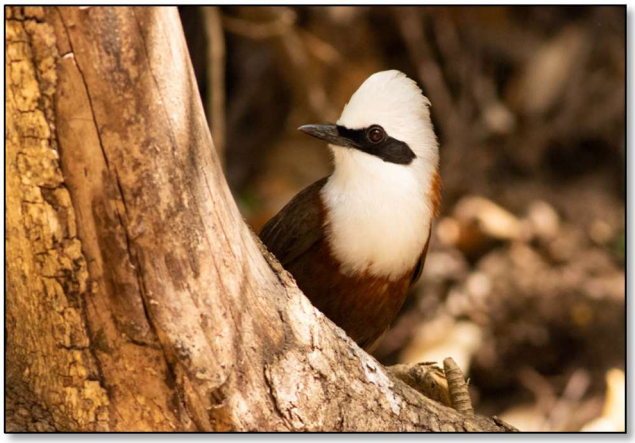
Orange-bellied Leafbird female (Photo: Umesh Mani)

At the Studio, another gorgeous visitor turned up – the Orange-bellied Leafbird! The female hung around for quite some, but the male took a quick dip, then went off to sun and preen himself on a tree.

The Himalayan Bulbul marked its attendance, and we finally got to see the beautiful White-crested Laughingthrush, which we had been missing all this time.

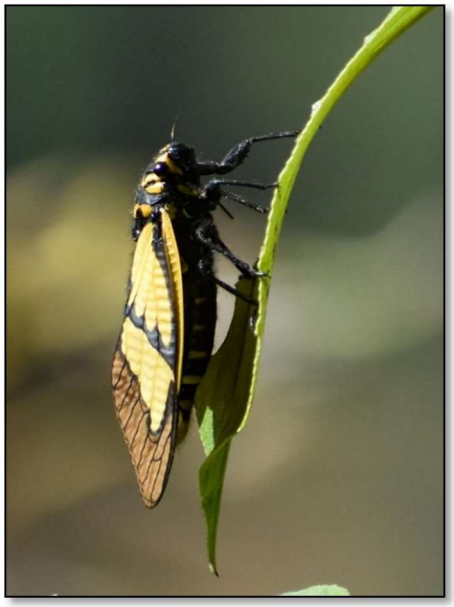


Himalayan Bulbul (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)



White-crested Laughingthrush (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A Grey (aka Hanuman) Langur sat on the grass for a while, contemplating the world in a pensive mood – then turned and gave us a look as if to say, "You created this mess – *you* deal with it!"



Cicada (*Sulphogaeana sulphurea*)
(Photo: Dr Barnali Chaudhuri)

Fire-flame Bush (*Woodfordia fruticosa*)
(Photo: Dr Barnali Chaudhuri)

Weeping Bottlebrush (*Melaleuca viminalis*) (Photo: Umesh Mani)

The Fire-flame Bush and the Weeping Bottlebrush added a splash of colour, and gave us a diversion from the procession of birds, as did some Dragonflies. There were also a lot of butterflies around.

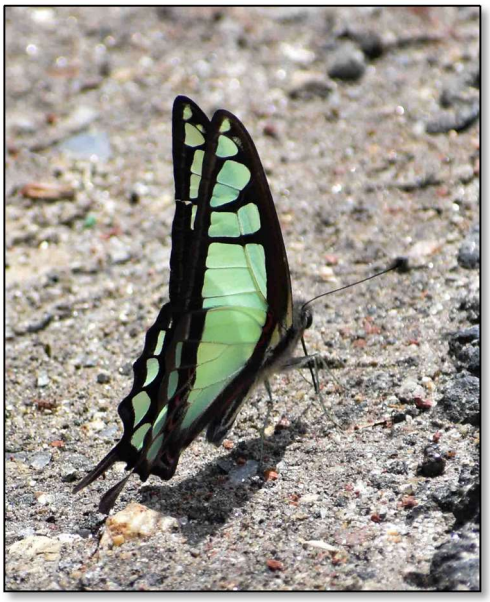
Crimson-tailed Marsh Hawk (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Indigo Dropwing (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Crimson Dropwing (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Large White (*Pieris brassicae*) (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Pallid Argus (*Callerebia scanda*) (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)



Glassy Bluebottle (*Graphium cloanthus*)
(Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Azure Sapphire (*Heliophorus moorei*)
(Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

We had had a pretty frenetic session involving a stream of birds, but it was now 10AM, and getting hot. We decided to take a break and resume after lunch.

In the afternoon, we headed towards Chafi. At the outset, we saw a couple of Jungle Mynas, one of them with what seemed to be nesting material. Once we got out of the town, we started seeing a few birds even though it was afternoon.

Jungle Myna with nesting material (Photo: Umesh Mani)

The first was an Asian Barred Owlet which seemed to be scanning the ground for rodents. Imagine our delight when it was joined by another individual! We spent the next few minutes watching them, before one flew off to another nearby tree.

Asian Barred Owlet (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

This was the same area where, on an earlier trip, we had seen the Tawny Fish Owl, but we were not so lucky this time.

As we walked along the river, some regular birds followed: Grey Bushchat, Grey-hooded Warbler, Red-wattled Lapwing, Grey Wagtail, Red-billed Blue Magpie. Then, on a distant boulder, we located what we were looking for – the Crested Kingfisher. We started walking towards it, carefully taking an oblique rather than direct route. The bird turned out to be very obliging, and allowed us to approach quite close.

Crested Kingfisher (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

A Blue Whistling Thrush was also hopping about. I took a few photos, but unfortunately it was only later that I noticed that it had a prey – probably a young Red-vented Bulbul. Since they are not generally known to actively hunt birds, possibly it may have been an injured or dead bird that the Thrush had picked up.

Blue Whistling Thrush with prey (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Spotted Forktail (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

After having spent a long time at the river, we started moving back. We had been unsuccessfully looking for a long time, but finally managed to find one at a nearby stream – the Spotted Forktail. We also saw a pair of Kalij Pheasants fly across the stream.

Beautiful Lantana flowers (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Plum-headed Parakeet (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A dry tree in a valley next to the road was loaded with Plum-headed Parakeets – a fitting, colourful end to a day that had been by turns frenetic and peaceful, but always productive.

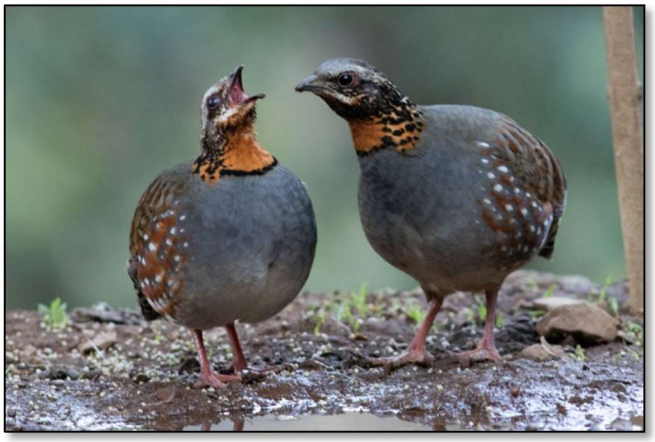
Day-8: April 21, 2022: Sattal

Today was our last day at Sattal, and we were keen to make the most of it. The guide had planned a session at a hide, to give us a sample of a different experience. Accordingly, we got up prompt and early, reached the hide by about 05:45AM, and settled down.

The hide (Photo courtesy: Dr Barnali Chaudhuri)

The guide had already told us that the birds would come in fits and starts, so we were prepared for periods of inactivity. In spite of that, after about half an hour of no birds – although it was still not fully bright – we were beginning to get restless.

Then, one by one, the birds started coming. First was the Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler, followed by Russet Sparrow, Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Spotted Dove, Greater Yellownape and Red-billed Blue Magpie. However, the light was so poor – it was still early morning – and we were not able to get any photographs at all. But the guide told us that they would probably come again, so we were a little reassured.



Rufous-throated Partridge (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A pair of Rufous-throated Partridges came, and my day was made! In spite of multiple trips to the region and birding in many different forest patches, I had not been able to see this bird previously, so I was thrilled to finally see it, even though it was at a hide.

Plum-headed Parakeet (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A large flock of Plum-headed Parakeets, numbering more than twenty, landed up and virtually took over the place.

The Laughingthrushes also, by virtue of the sheer number in which they move around, tend to do the same. A flock of White-throated Laughingthrushes came by.

Russet Sparrow (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Greater Yellownape (Photo: Umesh Mani)

The Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler came back, and since the light had improved a bit now, we were able to get some photographs. So did the Russet Sparrow, Greater Yellownape and Red-billed Blue Magpie.

Grey-winged Blackbird (Photo: Umesh Mani)

White-browed Fantail (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Black-headed Jay (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

The Grey-winged Blackbird and White-browed Fantail also dropped in again, as did a Black-headed Jay.

Oriental Turtle Dove (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

The Oriental Turtle Dove, although fairly common, is still an eye-catcher. We also saw a very dark-looking individual, which we felt must be a juvenile.

Emerald Dove (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Eurasian Collared Dove (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Spotted Dove (Photo: Umesh Mani)

The Emerald Dove, Spotted Dove and Eurasian Collared Dove completed our collection of Doves.

A Grey Treepie came to drink water, and was soon joined by another.

Grey Treepie (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Streaked Laughingthrush and Grey-headed Woodpecker were some of the other birds that turned up. We watched for a bit as the latter dug into a dead tree.

Grey-headed Woodpecker (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

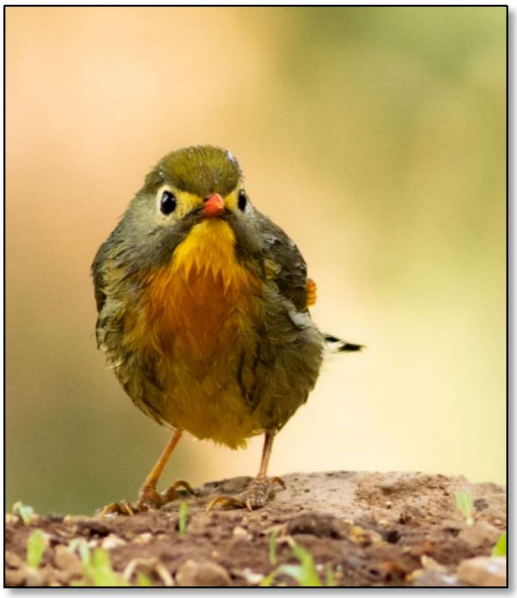
A Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush gave good views, as did a Yellow-crowned Woodpecker.

Yellow-crowned Woodpecker (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Red-billed Blue Magpie (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

The Red-billed Blue Magpie returned to take a bath in a small pan of water, and it was a wonder how it managed to fit! It made for some very nice photographs, though.

Oriental Magpie Robin carrying nesting material
(Photo: Umesh Mani)



Red-billed Leiothrix (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Orange-headed Thrush (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Some common birds came by – Verditer Flycatcher, Oriental Magpie Robin with nesting material, Blue-winged Siva, Red-billed Leiothrix (pretty late, I thought), Orange-headed Thrush, Green-backed Tit, Himalayan Bulbul, Red-vented Bulbul, and a Black Bulbul that had a lot of what I thought were feathers in and around its mouth – this turned out to be spider webs.

Black Bulbul (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A Plum-headed Parakeet nibbled on some fruit that it daintily held in one foot.

Blue-throated Flycatcher (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Blyth's Leaf Warbler (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher and a Blyth's Leaf Warbler turned up.

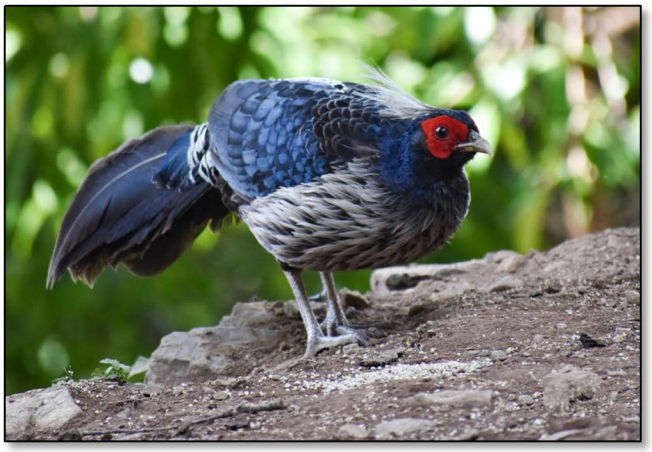
Tickell's Thrush (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A Tickell's Thrush regarded the water contemplatively for a while before deciding to go ahead and slake its thirst. The Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush returned and gave us another opportunity to take some decent photographs.

White-throated Laughingthrush with worm
(Photo: Umesh Mani)

A White-throated Laughingthrush found a beautiful but very hairy-looking caterpillar. Unlike the usual, it spent a long time carefully nudging it around, trying to find a way to eat it – made me wonder if perhaps the caterpillar had some sort of defence mechanism that made the Laughingthrush so wary.

A Kalij Pheasant pair engaged us for a while – while it is common enough in its range, we rarely get to see it properly.

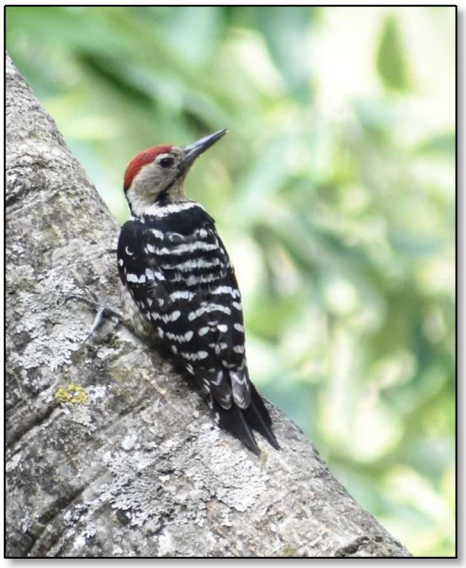


Kalij Pheasant male (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Kalij Pheasant female (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

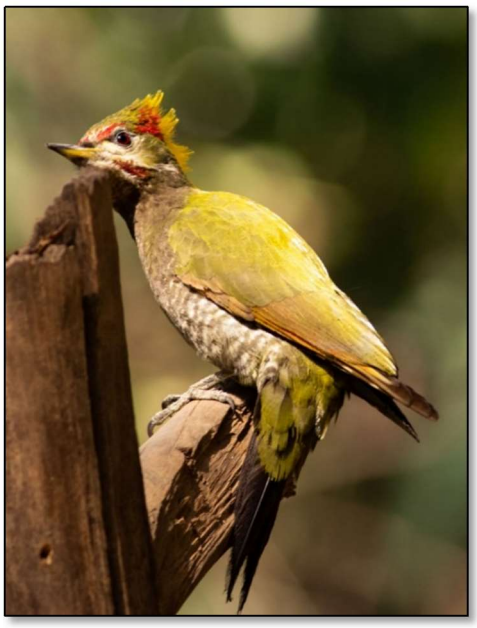
A group of the gorgeous White-crested Laughingthrushes arrived – noisy as usual.

White-crested Laughingthrush (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)



Brown-fronted Woodpecker
(Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

The trees nearby also had some woodpecker action. A Brown-fronted Woodpecker, Lesser Yellownape and Yellow-crowned Woodpecker were all seen hopping about.



Lesser Yellownape (Photo: Umesh Mani)

The people who manage the hide usually put out water, pieces of fruit, torn up *chapatis*, and a good quantity of mixed grains and millets, and this provides the birds with some easy access to food and water. Most of us, of course, feel that this would lead, in the long run, to modification of their eating habits and, possibly, loss of the ability to forage and fend for themselves. At the same time, birds undeniably face many threats to their natural habitats – with deforestation, change of land use from forest to agriculture, and so on, and maybe this gives them some relief, especially in the hot summer months.

Be that as it may, I cannot deny that it was a pleasant change to be able to see and photograph these birds well, and for me personally, it was also a relief to see some species that I had never managed to find in the forest earlier.

We decided to wind up and break for lunch. En route, we stopped for a bit at a small forest patch where Brown Wood Owls were known to be seen. As expected, we found one immediately – but it was high up inside a tangle of branches, and it was really difficult to get a clear view.

Brown Wood Owl (Photo: Umesh Mani)

After lunch and a nap – it was anyway too hot to be birding! – we got started around 4:00PM. Since there wasn't much time, we decided to go back to the Studio where, we figured, those who were so inclined could also take a walk in the attached forest. Some of us chose to stay back at the Studio, reasoning that a relaxed session would not be amiss after a few gruelling days in the first half of the trip.

The Red-billed Leiothrix is usually among the first birds to arrive – same was the case today. It was soon followed by Grey-hooded Warbler, Oriental White-eye, Blyth's Leaf Warbler, Blue-winged Siva, Rufous Sibia, Blue Whistling Thrush, Himalayan Black-lored Tit, Green-backed Tit – it was an absolute procession, possibly heightened due to the shorter evening window available to the birds.

Rufous Sibia (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Many flycatchers came by, too: Ultramarine Flycatcher, Verditer Flycatcher, White-browed Fantail and Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher.

Ultramarine Flycatcher (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

With that, we came to the end of the trip. As always, we wished that we had a few more days – but then it is never enough. There WAS also a sense of satisfaction at having scored some wonderful species, captured some nice photographs, and most importantly, got in some great birding. What more could one ask for!

The full list of birds seen during the trip is given below:

Sl #	Species Name	Scientific Name	Dehradun	Rishikesh & En route Mandal	Mandal	Chopta & Makku	Tungnath	Manila	Sattal - Studio & Hide	Sattal - Chafi River
			13 Apr 2022	14 Apr 2022	15 Apr 2022	16 Apr 2022	18 Apr 2022	19 Apr 2022	19 Apr 2022	20 Apr 2022
1	Alpine Accentor	*Prunella collaris*					Y			
2	Alpine Thrush	*Zoothera mollissima*			Y					
3	Ashy Drongo	*Dicrurus leucophaeus*			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
4	Ashy-throated Warbler	*Phylloscopus maculipennis*				Y				
5	Asian Barred Owlet	*Glaucidium cuculoides*								Y
6	Asian Brown Flycatcher	*Muscicapa dauurica*							Y	
7	Asian Koel	*Eudynamys scolopaceus*								Y
8	Banded Bay Cuckoo	*Cocomantis sonneratii*							Y	
9	Bar-tailed Treecreeper	*Certhia himalayana*						Y	Y	
10	Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike	*Hemipus picatus*			Y					
11	Black Bulbul	*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*			Y				Y	
12	Black Francolin	*Francolinus francolinus*			Y					
13	Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*	Y	Y	Y					
14	Black-chinned Babbler	*Cyanoderma pyrrhops*			Y					
15	Black-headed Cuckooshrike	*Coracina melanoptera*							Y	
16	Black-headed Jay	*Garrulus lanceolatus*						Y	Y	
17	Black-rumped Flameback	*Dinopium benghalense*							Y	
18	Black-throated Bushtit	*Aegithalos concinnus*			Y		Y		Y	
19	Black-throated Sunbird	*Aethopyga saturata*			Y					
20	Blue Rock Pigeon	*Columba livia*	Y							

21	Blue Whistling Thrush	*Myophonus caeruleus*			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
22	Blue-capped Rock Thrush	*Monticola cinclorhyncha*			Y			Y		
23	Blue-throated Barbet	*Psilopogon asiaticus*			Y				Y	
24	Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher	*Cyornis rubeculoides*							Y	
25	Blue-winged Siva	*Actinodura cyanouroptera*							Y	
26	Blyth's Leaf Warbler	*Phylloscopus reguloides*				Y			Y	
27	Brown Dipper	*Cinclus pallasii*			Y					
28	Brown Rock Chat	*Cercomela fusca*		Y						
29	Brown Wood Owl	*Strix leptogrammica*							Y	
30	Brown-fronted Woodpecker	*Dendrocoptes auriceps*			Y				Y	
31	Buff-barred Warbler	*Phylloscopus pulcher*			Y					
32	Cheer Pheasant	*Catreus wallichii*						Y		
33	Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch	*Sitta cinnamoventris*							Y	
34	Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush	*Monticola rufiventris*				Y				
35	Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush	*Trochalopteron erythrocephalum*			Y	Y				
36	Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	*Merops leschenaulti*		Y	Y					
37	Chestnut-headed Tesia	*Cettia castaneocoronata*			Y					
38	Chestnut-tailed Minla	*Siva strigula*				Y	Y			
39	Chestnut-tailed Starling	*Sturnia malabarica*							Y	Y
40	Coal Tit	*Periparus ater*				Y	Y		Y	
41	Collared Owlet	*Glaucidium brodiei*				Y				
42	Common Hawk Cuckoo	*Hierococcyx varius*				Y				
43	Common Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*							Y	
44	Common Myna	*Acridotheres tristis*	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	
45	Common Rosefinch	*Carpodacus erythrinus*			Y				Y	
46	Crested Kingfisher	*Megaceryle lugubris*								Y
47	Dusky Crag Martin	*Ptyonoprogne concolor*		Y						
48	Emerald Dove	*Chalcophaps indica*							Y	
49	Eurasian Collared Dove	*Streptopelia decaocto*			Y				Y	Y
50	Eurasian Hoopoe	*Upupa epops*			Y	Y				
51	Eurasian Jay	*Garrulus glandarius*			Y					
52	Eurasian Woodcock	*Scolopax rusticola*				Y				
53	Fire-breasted Flowerpecker	*Dicaeum ignipectus*			Y					
54	Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker	*Dendrocopos macei*			Y					
55	Golden Bush Robin	*Tarsiger chrysaeus*				Y	Y			
56	Golden Eagle	*Aquila chrysaetos*				Y	Y			
57	Great Barbet	*Psilopogon virens*		Y	Y	Y			Y	
58	Greater Yellownape	*Chrysophlegma flavinucha*							Y	Y
59	Green-backed Tit	*Parus monticolus*							Y	
60	Greenish Warbler	*Phylloscopus trochiloides*							Y	
61	Grey Bushchat	*Saxicola ferreus*			Y					Y
62	Grey Nightjar	*Caprimulgus (indicus) jotaka*					Y			
63	Grey Treepie	*Dendrocitta formosae*			Y				Y	
64	Grey Wagtail	*Motacilla cinerea*			Y	Y	Y		Y	Y
65	Grey-breasted Prinia	*Prinia hodgsonii*			Y					

66	Grey-crested Tit	*Lophophanes dichrous*				Y				
67	Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher	*Culicicapa ceylonensis*			Y	Y			Y	
68	Grey-headed Woodpecker	*Picus canus*							Y	
69	Grey-hooded Warbler	*Phylloscopus xanthoschistos*			Y				Y	Y
70	Grey-winged Blackbird	*Turdus boulboul*				Y			Y	Y
71	Griffon sp	*Gyps sp*							Y	
72	Hill Partridge	*Arborophila torqueola*				Y				
73	Himalayan Black-lored Tit	*Machlolophus xanthogenys*			Y				Y	
74	Himalayan Bluetail	*Tarsiger rufilatus*					Y			
75	Himalayan Bulbul	*Pycnonotus leucogenys*		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	
76	Himalayan Cuckoo	*Cuculus saturatus*				Y				
77	Himalayan Griffon	*Gyps himalayensis*		Y		Y	Y			
78	Himalayan Monal	*Lophophorus impejanus*				Y	Y			
79	Himalayan Rubythroat	*Calliope pectoralis*			Y					
80	Himalayan Shrike-babbler	*Pteruthius ripleyi*			Y					
81	Himalayan Woodpecker	*Dendrocopos himalayensis*				Y	Y			
82	House Crow	*Corvus splendens*			Y					
83	House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*		Y	Y	Y			Y	Y
84	Hume's Leaf Warbler	*Phylloscopus humei*			Y				Y	
85	Indian Blue Robin	*Luscinia brunnea*							Y	
86	Indian Paradise-flycatcher	*Terpsiphone paradisi*			Y				Y	
87	Indian Robin	*Copsychus fulicatus*		Y						
88	Jungle Babbler	*Turdoides striata*		Y						
89	Jungle Myna	*Acridotheres fuscus*			Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
90	Kalij Pheasant	*Lophura leucomelanos*			Y	Y			Y	Y
91	Koklass Pheasant	*Pucrasia macrolopha*				Y	Y	Y		
92	Lammergeier	*Gypaetus barbatus*					Y			
93	Large-billed Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	
94	Lemon-rumped Warbler	*Phylloscopus chloronotus*				Y				
95	Lesser Yellownape	*Picus chlorolophus*							Y	
96	Long-tailed Minivet	*Pericrocotus ethologus*			Y	Y			Y	
97	Long-tailed Shrike	*Lanius schach*								Y
98	Mountain Hawk Eagle	*Nisaetus nipalensis*						Y	Y	
99	Olive-backed Pipit	*Anthus hodgsoni*			Y					
100	Orange-bellied Leafbird	*Chloropsis hardwickii*							Y	
101	Orange-headed Thrush	*Zoothera citrina*							Y	
102	Oriental Magpie Robin	*Copsychus saularis*			Y				Y	Y
103	Oriental Turtle Dove	*Streptopelia orientalis*			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
104	Oriental White-eye	*Zosterops palpebrosus*			Y				Y	
105	Pink-browed Rosefinch	*Carpodacus rodochroa*					Y			
106	Plumbeous Water Redstart	*Phoenicurus fuliginosus*			Y	Y				
107	Plum-headed Parakeet	*Psittacula cyanocephala*			Y				Y	Y
108	Purple Sunbird	*Cinnyris asiaticus*		Y						Y
109	Red Junglefowl	*Gallus gallus*							Y	
110	Red-billed Blue Magpie	*Urocissa erythroryncha*			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
111	Red-billed Leiothrix	*Leiothrix lutea*							Y	
112	Red-vented Bulbul	*Pycnonotus cafer*		Y	Y				Y	
113	Red-wattled Lapwing	*Vanellus indicus*							Y	Y
114	Rose-ringed Parakeet	*Psittacula krameri*				Y			Y	
115	Rosy Pipit	*Anthus roseatus*					Y			

116	Rufous Sibia	*Heterophasia capistrata*			Y	Y			Y	
117	Rufous-bellied Woodpecker	*Dendrocopos hyperythrus*				Y				
118	Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush	*Garrulax rufogularis*							Y	
119	Rufous-throated Partridge	*Arborophila rufogularis*							Y	
120	Russet Sparrow	*Passer cinnamomeus*			Y	Y		Y	Y	
121	Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler	*Megapomatorhinus erythrogenys*							Y	
122	Rusty-tailed Flycatcher	*Certhia nipalensis*			Y					
123	Scarlet Minivet	*Pericrocotus flammeus*			Y	Y			Y	
124	Shikra	*Accipiter badius*		Y						
125	Slaty-headed Parakeet	*Psittacula himalayana*							Y	
126	Small Niltava	*Niltava macgrigoriae*			Y					
127	Snow Pigeon	*Columba leuconota*				Y				
128	Spotted Dove	*Streptopelia chinensis*		Y		Y			Y	
129	Spotted Forktail	*Enicurus maculatus*			Y	Y				Y
130	Steppe Eagle	*Aquila nipalensis*		Y						
131	Streaked Laughingthrush	*Trochalopteron lineatum*			Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
132	Streak-throated Swallow	*Petrochelidon fluvicola*			Y			Y		Y
133	Striated Laughingthrush	*Grammatoptila striata*				Y			Y	
134	Striated Prinia	*Prinia crinigera*					Y			
135	Tickell's Thrush	*Turdus unicolor*			Y	Y			Y	
136	Ultramarine Flycatcher	*Ficedula superciliaris*			Y	Y			Y	Y
137	Variegated Laughingthrush	*Trochalopteron variegatum*				Y	Y			
138	Verditer Flycatcher	*Eumyias thalassinus*			Y		Y	Y	Y	Y
139	Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon	*Treron sphenurus*			Y			Y	Y	
140	Western Crowned Warbler	*Phylloscopus occipitalis*							Y	
141	Whiskered Yuhina	*Yuhina flavicollis*			Y					
142	White-browed Fantail	*Rhipidura aureola*							Y	
143	White-capped Redstart	*Phoenicurus leucocephalus*					Y			
144	White-crested Laughingthrush	*Garrulax leucolophus*							Y	
145	White-tailed Nuthatch	*Sitta himalayensis*				Y				
146	White-throated Laughingthrush	*Ianthocincla albogularis*				Y			Y	
147	Yellow-billed Blue Magpie	*Urocissa flavirostris*				Y				
148	Yellow-billed Chough	*Pyrrhocorax graculus*					Y			
149	Yellow-browed Tit	*Sylviparus modestus*				Y				
150	Yellow-crowned Woodpecker	*Dendrocopos mahrattensis*							Y	

Some other photos taken during the trip:

Orchid Tree (*Bauhinia variegata*) (Photo: Dr Barnali Chaudhuri)

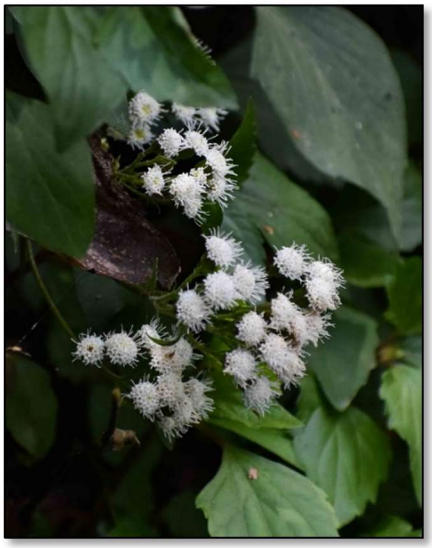
Black-headed Jay (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush (Photo: Umesh Mani)

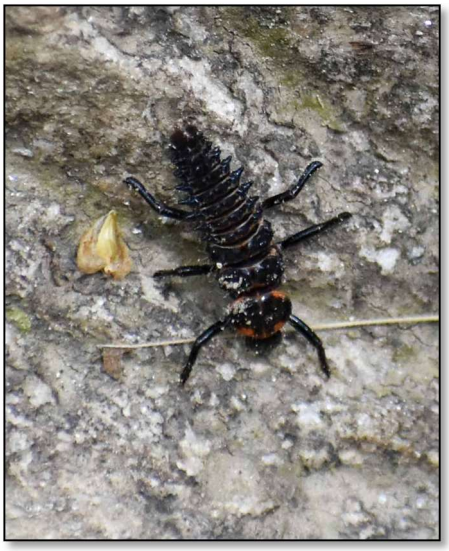
Indian Cabbage White (*Pieris canidia*)
(Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Bumble Bee (Genus *Bombus*) (Photo: Dr Barnali Chaudhuri)

Striated Laughingthrush (Photo: Umesh Mani)



Snakeroot (Genus *Ageratina*)
(Photo: Dr Barnali Chaudhuri)



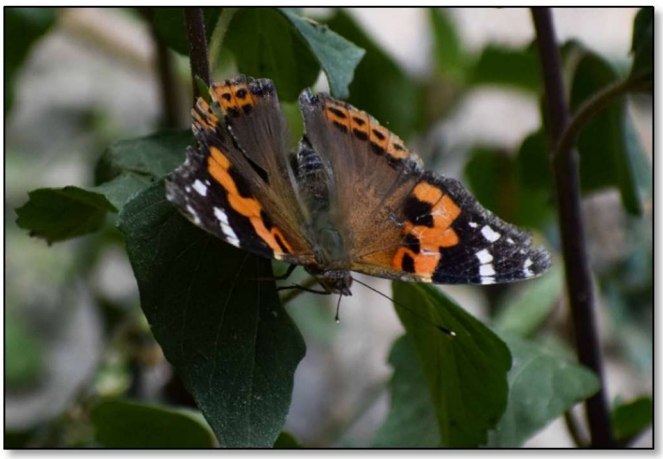
Black-spotted Lady Beetle
(Tribe *Coccinellini*)
(Photo: Dr Barnali Chaudhuri)

Chocolate Pansy (*Junonia iphita*)
(Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Red-billed Blue Magpie (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Common Sailer (*Neptis hylas*) (Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

Tickell's Thrush (Photo: Umesh Mani)



Indian Red Admiral (*Vanessa indica*)
(Photo: Dr Anwesha Chaudhuri)

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Cover photo credit: Koklass Pheasant, by Umesh Mani

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For information, write to: Deccan Birders, PO Box 45, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad – 500034. **Website:** www.deccanbirders.in. **E-group:** http://groups.google.co.in/group/deccanbirders. **Society membership** (in Rs.): Annual: 500 per annum; Student: 200 per annum; Corporate: 2000 per annum; Life: 3000. (*Add Rs 75 for outstation cheques.)*